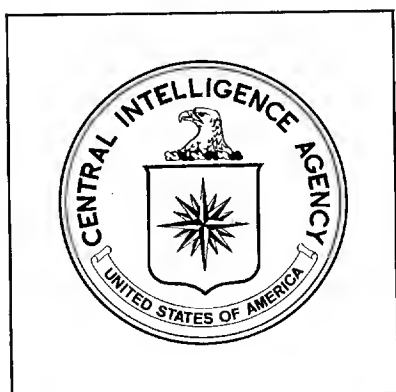


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MIDDLE EAST — AFRICA — SOUTH ASIA

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Nigeria

Constitutional Drafting Committee Appointed

The military government headed by Brigadier Muhammed has begun to implement its recently unveiled five-stage program to return Nigeria to civilian rule by 1979. Last week the regime announced the formation of a committee to draft a future constitution. The committee has been given until next September to complete an initial draft.

The 50-man committee includes several well known former politicians who were leaders in various regionally-based political parties that existed prior to January 1966 when Nigeria's first military regime came to power. Among those named are two prominent Ibos who supported the secessionist Biafran regime, a number of old ideologues of a socialist bent, and some lesser known Nigerians who have reputations as economic nationalists. The committee members have been drawn from the legal profession, universities, business community, and local government, and include at least two representatives from each of Nigeria's twelve states. Inasmuch as the regime does not intend to lift the ban on political activities for at least three more years, many of the committee members can be expected to try to use the committee as a springboard to future political careers.

Nigeria's most prominent ex-politician, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the former Yoruba-based Action Group party, was appointed to the committee but has publicly stated that he declines to serve. Awolowo, who advocates a swift return to civilian rule, no doubt is deeply frustrated by the regime's four year timetable. He will be 70 years old by 1979 and realizes that his leadership hopes are fading with his advancing age and lack of appeal among younger Nigerians. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Ghana

Major Government Reorganization

Junta leader Colonel Acheampong last week announced a major restructuring of Ghana's three-year-old military regime. The new government structure is intended to give the armed forces a more active and direct role in governing the country. Acheampong probably hopes that this will serve to lessen the chances for coup plotting by restive officers who will now have more opportunities for advancement.

Ghana's former ruling body, the National Redemption Council (NRC), has now been superseded as the top policy-making group by a new 7-man Supreme Military Council (SMC) chaired by Acheampong. The SMC's other members are: the chief of the defense staff; the inspector general of police; and the four service chiefs, who were excluded from the NRC. Each member, with the exception of the chairman, holds office concurrently with the term of his service appointment.

The NRC retains some functions, but has been downgraded in importance and expanded in size. It is now charged only with administering policy and overseeing the operation of government ministries. Its membership includes the members of the Supreme Military Council, commissioners of state (heads of ministries), regional commissioners, and the commanders of the army's two infantry brigades. Several new commissioners have been appointed, including some from the lower echelons of the military.

Provision has also been made for the NRC to be assisted by "advisory committees" that may be attached to various government ministries as needed. The advisory committees apparently are intended to allow more junior officers and possibly some civilians to participate in government activities. To date, the regime has done little to provide for civilian participation in the government because of its distrust of former politicians.

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In the course of the reorganization, three officers who collaborated with Acheampong in the 1972 coup were not included in the new ruling council. Their relations with Acheampong recently had become somewhat strained, making it more difficult for the government to make decisions and to speak with one voice. The three officers still retain ministerial portfolios in the government, however, and have been given military promotions.

The sweeping reorganization of the government probably serves to give the beleaguered regime a much needed face lift, but Acheampong still must reverse the impression of drift he has conveyed in dealing with Ghana's deteriorating economic situation. He must also dispel growing suspicions that he is engaged in corrupt business dealings. Disgruntled army officers of the Ewe tribe have been plotting since late last year and still seem to be trying to organize a coup. (SECRET)

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Kenya

Kenyatta Frees Old Rival

President Kenyatta, whose tough tactics appear to be keeping his adversaries in parliament and the universities in line, feels sufficiently in control of the situation to have released a former rival from prison on October 21. Richard Achieng Oneko, a former minister of information and leading member of the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU)--a now outlawed party that received extensive support from the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s, was freed after six years of imprisonment.

Oneko and KPU leader Oginga Odinga--both Luo tribesmen--were jailed in 1969 for allegedly fomenting anti-Kenyatta demonstrations in the aftermath of the assassination of Luo politician Tom Mboya. Odinga was released from prison in 1971, but has been unable to make a political comeback. The Luo are left without any leaders of stature and now play a minor role in Kenyan politics, even though they are the country's second largest tribe.

Kenyatta may have freed Oneko as part of an effort to ensure continuing dominance for his tribal group. There are indications that a contest for future political leadership is shaping up between Kenyatta's faction of the Kikuyu tribe and another broadly based grouping headed by Vice President Daniel arap Moi and Finance Minister Mwai Kibaki. The two sides are reportedly trying to line up support from the Luo. (SECRET NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON)

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